

The Benefits of Breastfeeding

Human milk is uniquely suited for humans.

- Babies were born to be breastfed.
- Human milk is easy to digest and contains more than 200 components that babies need in the early months of life.
- Factors in breast milk protect infants from a wide variety of illnesses.
- Children who have been breastfed have less risk of becoming overweight or obese, even as adults.
- Research has shown that children who were breastfed had higher IQs.

Breastfeeding saves lives.

- Lack of breastfeeding is a risk factor for sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
- Human milk protects premature infants from life-threatening digestive diseases.
- Breastfed children have lower risk of dying before their first birthday.

Breastfed infants are healthier.

- Formula-fed infants have twice the risk of having ear infections in the first year than infants who are exclusively breastfed for at least four months.
- Breastfeeding reduces the incidence, and lessens the severity of, a large number of infections, including pneumonia and meningitis in infants.
- Breastfeeding protects infants against a variety of illnesses, such as diarrhea and infant botulism.
- Breastfed babies have less chance of allergies, asthma, and eczema.
- Evidence suggests that exclusive breastfeeding for at least two months protects susceptible children from Type I insulin dependent diabetes mellitus (IDDM).
- Breastfeeding may reduce the risk for inflammatory bowel disease, multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis and childhood cancers.

Breastfeeding helps mothers recover from childbirth.

- Breastfeeding helps the uterus to shrink to its pre-pregnancy size and reduces the amount of blood lost after delivery.
- Mothers who breastfeed for at least 3 months may lose more weight than mothers who do not breastfeed.
- Breastfeeding mothers usually resume their menstrual cycles 20 to 30 weeks later than mothers who do not breastfeed.

Breastfeeding keeps women healthier throughout their lives.

- Exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months can help in child spacing among women who do not use contraceptives (The Lactation Amenorrhea Method).
- Breastfeeding reduces the risk of breast and ovarian cancer.

- Breastfeeding may reduce the risk of osteoporosis.

Breastfeeding is economical.

- The cost of infant formula has increased 150% since the 1980's.
- Breastfeeding reduces health care costs.

Breastfeeding is environmentally friendly.

- Unlike infant formula, breastfeeding requires no fossil fuels for its manufacture or preparation.
- Breastfeeding reduces pollutants created as by-products during the manufacture of plastics for bottles and metal for cans to contain infant formula.
- Breastfeeding reduces the burden on our landfills, as there are no cans to throw away.